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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI 7130

INFO RUESBKC/ATO ASIA IMMEDIATE 1859

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA IMMEDIATE 7510

RUCPDOG/ALL USDOC DISTDIR COLLECTIVE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RHMCSUU/CDRAMC FT BELVOIR VA//AMCMI-SS// IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: MANAGING CONSULAR PUBLIC ACCESS AND CONTACT

During Influenza Outbreaks

REF: State 00043249

11. SUMMARY: This cable provides guidance for Consular Section Chiefs on managing public access and close contact during the current outbreak of H1N1 Influenza A, as well as during any future flu outbreaks and large-scale public health events. As with all health-related issues, local and Departmental public health guidelines prevail. Posts should consult with their Foreign Service Health Practitioner (FSHP) and local public health officials to ensure their guidance to the public is in line with expert opinions. END SUMMARY.

12. Public Access: Social distancing is the buzzword during any flu outbreak. Posts should use all possible means - Warden Messages, Embassy website, information boards at the Embassy entrance, etc. - to request that all persons who require non-emergency consular services and who feel unwell or exhibit flu-like symptoms postpone their business with the consular section. The notices should provide information on appointment rescheduling procedures and assure the public that appointments will be rescheduled as soon as the situation permits, and at no cost to the applicant. During severe outbreaks, Post should consider temporarily suspending all non-emergency consular operations to reduce the flow of possibly infected customers into the consular waiting area.

13. Screening Visitors: Posts should consult with their FSHP regarding instituting a screening plan for customers who appear for consular services. Front-line consular personnel - greeters, data intake clerks, etc. - should be briefed and watch for symptoms. Persons exhibiting flu-like symptoms should be instructed to postpone their appointments until their health improves.

14. Prison Visits: ACS Units should consider

rescheduling or postponing prison visits. If possible, conduct routine prison visits of long-term prisoners by phone when local conditions permit. In all cases, Post should consult with local prison officials regarding conditions at the prison, and when physical visits are necessary, take all appropriate precautions.

¶5. Hospital Visits: ACS Units are likely to receive requests for visits from sick Amcits or their families during large-scale public health events. Hospital visits are often not possible even during normal times because of resource constraints, and during an influenza outbreak or pandemic hospitals will strictly limit access to patients. Consular officers should use their usual tact and sensitivity to explain this reality to callers.

¶6. Emergency Services: When all else fails and close contact with the public cannot be postponed or avoided, please follow all public guidance for flu avoidance available on <http://www.cdc.gov>.

¶7. Minimize considered.

CLINTON